REMARKS

Claims 4-9 and 13-18 are now under consideration in the application. Of those, claim 4 has been amended once and claims 13-18 are new. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 4-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bloodworth (U.S. Pat. No. 4,455,646).

Applicant has amended independent claim 4 to further distinguish from the cited reference and hereby respectfully traverses the examiner's rejection with respect to claims 4-9.

Bloodworth discloses a digital automatic exchange for a telephone network. The local node (elements to the right of the connection 44) transmits a unique address, through the connection 44, to at least one of the remote nodes (such as telephone T116), changing the impedance of at least one of the remote nodes (T116) in response to said unique address being received at the at least one of the remote nodes (col. 7, lines 55-60); and determining therefrom that the connection is closed (on hook).

In response to the rejection, the applicant has amended independent claim 4 to indicate that the method includes simultaneously transmitting a unique address from the local node, through the connection, to all of the remote nodes. Applicant respectively avers that these elements are novel and nonobvious with respect to Bloodworth. Claims 5-9 depend from claim 4, which the applicant believes is in a condition for allowance, and are believed therefore to also be in a condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wissell (4,859,952) or over Laor (6,002,331) in view of Hunting et al. (5,097,213).

Wissell discloses a device for testing a single interconnect device (13). The device has a local node (12) connected to a remote node (14), and the local node senses an impedance change in the remote node (col 5, lines 24-33). It should be noted however, that the sensed impedance change is not the result of the remote node receiving a unique address as the applicant has claimed. Instead, the impedance change in Wissell is a result of a failure in the interconnect device 13.

Laor discloses a system for verifying that a plurality of connector plugs are connected to the proper sockets. The system operates by having a transducer (140) attached to each plug, where each transducer has a unique ID (col. 4, lines 31-35). The transducers' signals are received by adapter transducers 138 physically located in proximity to the sockets (Fig. 2 and col. 4, lines 19-21). A controller 142 receives the unique IDs from the transducers 138 and compares them to a database to ensure that each connector plug is inserted into the proper socket. It should be noted that Laor does not actually determine whether the connection is closed between the connector plugs and the connectors. Instead, Laor determines whether the plugs and connectors are mechanically coupled, and thereby implies that the connection is closed.

Hunting discloses a system for testing multipin connector. The system operates by addressing a connector pin (Fig. 8, step 72) and applying a predetermined electrical signal to across it (Fig. 8 steps 73, 74, 75). The system addresses and monitors the electrical waveforms at neighboring pins in the connector to determine whether there is

a low impedance path between connector pins. A change of impedance in this method would be the result of a connector failure, which is distinguished from the applicant's method of changing impedance as a result of receiving a unique address at the remote node.

Applicant respectively avers that the combinations of Wissell and Hunting, and of Laor and Hunting, are improper since taken together they do not provide all of the elements of the applicant's invention. In particular, none of these references provide the applicant's claimed step of changing the impedance of at least one of the remote nodes in response to said unique address being received at the at least one of the remote nodes. By way of contradistinction, the methods of Wissell and Hunting only sense an impedance change because of a failed connection. The method of Laor does not provide an impedance change at all.

NEW CLAIMS

Applicant has included new claims 13-18. New independent claim 13 is directed to a method similar to claim 4, however the method is used to detect whether one of a plurality of connections at the remote nodes is open instead of whether a connection is open. The new dependent claims 14-18 are similar to previously considered dependent claims 5-9.

Applicant believes that these new claims are allowable for the same reasons as cited for claims 4-9.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests

that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 944-6526.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 5/10/04

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